

The Joy of Ukiyo-e



Mikio Mizuta

I am humbled as well as delighted to hear that my collection will be introduced with commentary in a special issue of the Ukiyo-e Quarterly. I have an interesting story about how I came to devote myself to Ukiyo-e art. It all began thirty-five years ago.

When I was a university student, I was listening one day to a long lecture on so-called "secret pictures" in Ukiyo-e by a certain professor who was famous for his study of the muscles and soles of the feet of Japanese people. Unlike other commentaries focusing on aesthetic appreciation, such as those by Eiji Yoshida, this lecturer explained the pictures exclusively from the standpoint of an anatomist. He said that whether the artist was Harunobu, Kiyonaga, or Utamaro, all true masters of the craft were able to draw with anatomical accuracy the moment to moment changes in position and the subtle movements of the fingers and toes. At the end of the lecture, the professor laughed and said, "I have been engaged in the study of anatomy for forty years. Thanks to that, I discovered 'secret pictures' and gained an appreciation of Ukiyo-e."

In the audience that day was Professor Hajime Kawakami—a man famous for his solemnity—who was impressed most deeply by the lecture. I can still vividly recollect his slender, crane-like appearance, and how he often repeated to us that becoming an expert in an art was worthy of respect. As we were young students, the lecture stimulated our interest in Ukiyo-e. After that we began memorizing the names of Ukiyo-e artists, one after another.

Isamu Yoshii's tanka (thirty-one syllable poem) caused me to become interested in Sharaku. Needless to say, however, I could not afford to obtain Sharaku's works at that time.

There is no doubt that Ukiyo-e are beautiful. A special nostalgia for Japan's history runs deeply through the art. When people observe closely the beautiful women and genre scenes in Ukiyo-e, they feel affection for the Japanese folk, and their love for the nation can spontaneously become stronger. Prime Minister Ikeda has said, "The people's love for stones can lead directly to their love for the nation." I have the greatest respect for his grasp of politics. It seems to me, however, that rather than stones, the beautiful women in Ukiyo-e are more pleasing. Therefore, I believe that a good political culture which is firmly rooted in love of nation and homeland would possibly be born if all of Japan's politicians (including ruling party and opposition party) become a lover of Ukiyo-e instead of engaging in slow-down tactics that block political action.

(Ukiyo-e Quarterly, Vol. 6 Special Issue, Ryokuen Shobo; September, 1963)

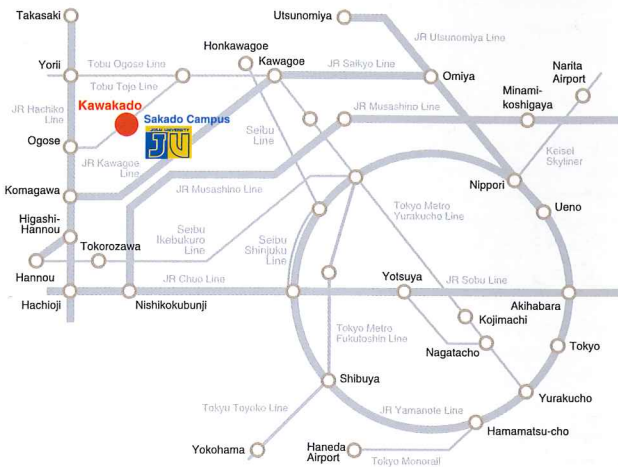
Museum Guide

Opening Hours : 10:00 – 16:00

Entrance Fee : varies from exhibition to exhibition

Closed : on Sundays, Mondays, Holidays, the University's Foundation Day (April 20), the summer and winter holidays of the University, and for change of exhibitions

Access



Mizuta Museum of Art, Josai University

1-1Keyaki-dai, Sakado-shi, SAITAMA 350-0295 JAPAN

Phone:+81-49-271-7327 Fax:+81-49-271-7342

<http://www.josai.ac.jp/~museum/>

Mizuta Museum of Art
Josai University



Noriko Mizuta Ph.D.
Chancellor
Josai University Educational
Corporation
Director Mizuta Museum of Art

Foreword

The Mizuta Museum of Art, Josai University was established in March 1979, by Mikio Mizuta, the founder of our university. It was housed on the eighth floor of the Mizuta Memorial Library and has, at its core, the collection of *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints he acquired during his lifetime. In addition to displaying these prints to the public, the museum contributes to the deepening of appreciation for Japanese culture and organizes exhibitions that have been widely acclaimed not only by our students, faculty and the neighboring community but also by scholars in Japan and abroad.

Building upon this history, and as part of the celebration of the 45th anniversary of the foundation of Josai University, a newly built Mizuta Museum of Art opened.

Along with the public exhibition of the Mizuta Collection at the new museum, we are planning special exhibits on various aspects of local culture — including that of Saitama prefecture and the city of Sakado, where the university is located — as well as to introduce Josai University to the community. We will do our utmost to insure that all our friends and well — wishers will enjoy the benefits of the new Mizuta Museum of Art and become familiar with its events.

About the Mizuta Collection



Tōshūsai Sharaku
(Matsumoto Yonesaburō as
Kewaizaka no Shōshō,
actually Shinobu)

The contents of the Mizuta collection, consisting of paintings and prints centered on *yakusha-e* (actor prints) and *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women) by Hishikawa Moronobu, the Torii School, Suzuki Harunobu, the Katsukawa School, Torii Kiyonaga, Kitagawa Utamaro, Katsushika Hokusai, and others, and ranging in time from early days of *ukiyo-e* to the end of the Edo and Meiji periods, makes it possible to systematically survey the development of *ukiyo-e*. A particular feature of the collection is the valuable inclusion of nine woodblock prints by the internationally acclaimed Tōshūsai Sharaku.



Kitagawa Utamaro
(Fishing Under a Bridge)



Miyagawa Chōshun
(Parody of Narihira's Travels East)



This museum received the Merit Award in the AIANY Design Awards 2012 from the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter.

Overview of Museum

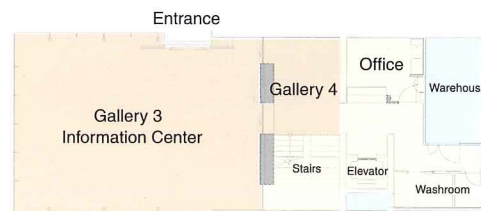
In 1979, the Mizuta Museum of Art, Josai University was founded in a wing on the eighth floor of the Mizuta Memorial Library. In December 2011, the current art museum opened as part of the university's 45th anniversary celebrations. The Mizuta collection focuses on the *ukiyo-e* collection that Mikio Mizuta, the founder of the school, had gathered before his death.

The Mizuta collection consists of over 200 pieces that focus on *ukiyo-e*. Through these pieces visitors can trace the process of *ukiyo-e*'s development from the early stage to modern Japanese painting. Also, the museum owns nine of Sharaku's works including rare woodblock prints. In keeping with university events, the museum will present a variety of exhibitions at the core of the Mizuta collection in the spring and fall.

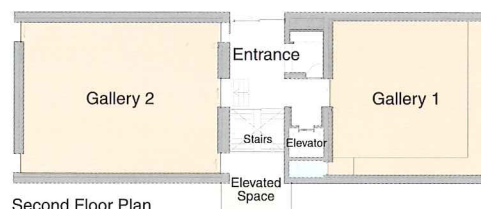
The museum's goal is to be loved as well as supported by the students, their parents, and local community.

Building Specifications

Completion year	: November 2011
Structure	: Reinforced concrete(part Steel)/2 stories
Total floor area	: 666.46m ²
Architect	: Studio SUMO Design Department, Obayashi Corporation
Contractor	: Tokyo Main Office, Obayashi Corporation



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

Gallery

There are four galleries in the Mizuta Museum of Art, Josai University. Gallery 1 and 2 exhibit the wide-range from the Mizuta collection to innovative works of modern art.

Gallery 3 displays the introduction of culture indicative of Sakado and the local area, information on the university, and other exhibitions. In Gallery 4, visitors can see a promotional video of the museum and what the museum showcases on DVD.



Gallery 1



Gallery 2



Gallery 3



Gallery 4



Elevated Space